



Circle Voluntary Housing Association

Electrical Safety Policy

Policy reference number	012-004
Version	3.0
Issue date	14th November 2022
Next Review Date	14th November 2024
Policy Owner	Russell Grainge
Role Title	Director of Property
Revision Date	14th November 2022

Contents

1.0 Values:.....	4
2.0 Introduction:	4
3.0 Purpose:	5
4.0 Scope:.....	5
5.0 Electrical Safety Policy:	5
5.1 Acquisition of New Homes:.....	5
5.2 Owners Management Companies (OMCs)/ Managing Agents:.....	5
5.3 Managing Agent Role:.....	5
5.4: Electrical Safety in the Home:.....	5
5.5 Estate Managed Electrical Safety:.....	6
5.6 Planned Maintenance:	6
5.7 Responsive Maintenance:.....	6
6.0 Portable Electrical Testing (PAT):.....	6
6.1 Roles & Responsibilities regarding PAT Testing:.....	7
6.2 Arrangements for Company Issued Staff Equipment Inspection & Testing:	7
6.3 Record Keeping:	7
6.4 Faults in PAT Tested Equipment:	7
7.0 Roles & Responsibilities regarding Electrical Safety:	8
7.1 Chief Executive Officer:.....	8
7.2 Leadership team:	8
7.3 Management Team:.....	8
7.4 Director of Property:.....	9
7.5 Asset Manager:	9
7.6 Asset & Facilities Co-ordinator:.....	9
7.7 Employees:.....	10
7.8 Health & Safety Committee:	10
7.9 Human Resources Department:.....	10
7.10 Tenants:	10
7.10.1 Tenant Electrical Equipment Safety Responsibilities:.....	11
7.11 Contractors:	11
8.0 Dissemination:	11
9.0 Implementation:	12
10.0 Review and Audit of Policy:	12
11.0 Associated Legislation:.....	12
12.0 Related Policies:	12

13.0 Appendices:.....	13
Appendix 1: Portable Equipment Definitions:	13

1.0 Values:

The actions we take underpin our vision to make a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need. At Circle Voluntary Housing Association, we firmly believe that how we interact with our customers, communities, colleagues, and key stakeholders is of fundamental importance. Our passionate commitment to caring about our tenants and the services we deliver has led to the development of our core values - six behaviour-based principles that speak directly to the characteristics we hold high.

WE HEAR

Willingness to embody all our values in a driven manner.

Empowerment of our staff and tenants

Honesty allows for complete understanding, it aids in the delivery of integrity and putting our tenants' best interests at the heart of our decision-making

Excellence reminds us of our continuous strive to be better

Accountability benefits all, transparency will foster this, and the creation of solid and reliable documentation will ensure that this accountability is enforced

Respect is the foundation of these values, without respect for ourselves, others, and the service we provide we must ask ourselves why we put so much of our valuable time into the job we do

2.0 Introduction:

It is the policy of the Circle Voluntary Housing Association to reduce, as far as is reasonably practicable, the risks to employees, tenants, contractors or others regarding electrical installations and appliances. The organisation is committed to meeting its legal obligations by complying with the requirements set out under the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act, 2005; the Guide to the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work (General application) Regulations 2007 Part3: Electricity; Housing (Standards for rented houses), and any other associated regulations, (please reference Section 11.0 for full list).

Electrical installations in properties owned and managed by Circle Voluntary Housing Association must be installed, maintained, and serviced to the required standards and inspected at appropriate intervals to minimise the risk of electrocution, fire, damage to property, injury, or death.

The organisation will ensure that appropriate contracts with suitably qualified Registered Electrical Contractors (REC) are in place to manage all maintenance, repair, testing, upgrade, and provision of new installation of electrical appliances, along with specialist contractors for lifts, electric gates and barriers, fire alarm equipment and any other specialist electrical equipment. All electrical works carried out on behalf of the organisation must adhere to Circle Voluntary Housing Association's Fire Safety policies and procedures.

At the core of electrical safety legislation is the risk assessment approach which is undertaken by Circle Voluntary Housing Association regarding electrical safety. The organisation regularly reviews electrical safety risk assessments for all properties owned or managed by Circle Voluntary Housing Association as per the organisation's Risk Management Policy & Procedures.

3.0 Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is to set out specific guidance to ensure the safety of fixed electrical installations and portable appliances (where applicable), in properties owned and managed by Circle Voluntary Housing Association, ensuring all legislative obligations are met, and to provide assurances that electrical safety is appropriately managed to protect the safety of employees, tenants, contractors, and others.

The roles and responsibilities of all staff, tenants and contractors regarding electrical safety are also defined within this policy.

4.0 Scope:

Circle Voluntary Housing Associations' Electrical Safety Policy applies to the maintenance, repair, upgrading, testing and inspection of all electrical installations in all buildings owned and managed by the organisation, including homes, common areas, community centres and office buildings. Electrical systems will be repaired, renewed, upgraded, and tested in accordance with manufacturers guidance and industry standards.

All electrical repairs, upgrades and renewals are categorised to ensure the appropriate levels of priority are given. During the review and assessment of electrical works required, where any health and safety matters or vulnerability requirements exist, these will be given priority.

This policy also sets out the management of Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) which applies to all portable equipment owned by the organisation.

5.0 Electrical Safety Policy:

5.1 Acquisition of New Homes:

Circle Voluntary Housing Association will ensure that all new homes coming into ownership or management of the organisation will meet all necessary electrical safety standards. For any second-hand properties or other properties that may have been left vacant for some time, the organisation will engage a REC contractor to inspect the installation and provide safety certification.

5.2 Owners Management Companies (OMCs)/ Managing Agents:

The organisation will ensure that any potential electrical safety breaches in the common areas are reported to the managing agent immediately, where that duty falls elsewhere, and ensure that the issue is addressed.

5.3 Managing Agent Role:

The organisation will fulfil all legal obligations in managing common areas including the testing and maintenance of all electrical installations and equipment. This includes lifts, door and entry systems, carpark gates and barriers and all electrical equipment associated with protecting a building from fire.

5.4: Electrical Safety in the Home:

Circle Voluntary Housing Association recognises the elevated risk of fire in the home from electrical faults and misuse of installations. To ensure the risks are minimised through responsive repairs and cyclical checks of electrical installations, the organisation will ensure the following occurs:

- All installations are checked by a REC after the first 10 years and then at 5-year intervals.
- Electrical safety checks are completed prior to re-letting of any Circle Voluntary Housing Association owned properties.
- Electrical safety awareness is raised with tenants. This information is delivered using the following methods:

- Annual fire safety awareness article in tenant newsletter.
- Tenant information at sign-up of new tenancies.
- Targeted communications as required.

5.5 Estate Managed Electrical Safety:

The organisation will utilise the estate management presence of our frontline teams such as Mobile Maintenance Officers, Tenancy Services Officers, Asset and Repairs Officers, to effectively manage electrical safety within Circle Voluntary Housing Associations' housing schemes, ensuring all installations are maintained to a safe standard. This will be achieved through several approaches including:

- Regular and planned estate inspections, the purpose of which are to identify any electrical faults or disrepair; to schedule maintenance and/or repair; and to address these issues in a timely manner.
- Informal and unplanned estate visits, the purpose of which are to identify any electrical faults or disrepair; to schedule maintenance and/or repair; and to address these issues in a timely manner.
- Requirement of all appropriate on-site Circle Voluntary Housing Association staff to report identified electrical issues as a matter of priority.
- Respond to all electrical faults and repairs in an efficient manner and in order of priority.

5.6 Planned Maintenance:

Circle Voluntary Housing Association will ensure all electrical installations are maintained and are in safe working condition by ensuring a schedule of planned maintenance is carried out. This will be achieved as follows:

- Implementation of cyclical servicing contracts with appropriately registered and accredited electrical engineers for all mechanical and electrical equipment including lifts, door entry systems, car park gates and barriers, fire safety equipment and emergency lighting etc.
- Carrying out regular safety checks of fire and CO² detectors in tenants' homes.
- Developing long term planned replacement programmes for all electrical installations.
- Carrying out regular stock condition surveys.
- Carrying out an initial 10-year electrical safety check of all our installations (domestic and in common areas), repeated at 5 yearly intervals.
- Reviewing repair trends to identify any failing components.

5.7 Responsive Maintenance:

Circle Voluntary Housing Association will respond to and action all tenant repair in a timely manner, ensuring tenant and others are not at risk of an electrical hazard. Where any health and safety matters or vulnerability requirements exist, these will be given priority.

6.0 Portable Electrical Testing (PAT):

The Safety, Health, and Welfare (General Application) Regulations, 2007, Part 3: Electricity (S.I. No. 299), requires all Irish employers to maintain portable equipment in a manner that ensures equipment is safe to use and fit for purpose. To meet these legal obligations, Circle Voluntary Housing Association will ensure all portable devices owned by the organisation are PAT tested on an annual basis.

The following policy applies to all portable electrical appliances owned by Circle Voluntary Housing Association, including equipment issued to staff to facilitate home working. Please reference Appendix 1 for information regarding PAT definitions.

6.1 Roles & Responsibilities regarding PAT Testing:

Circle Voluntary Housing Association staff and contractors are responsible for:

- Ensuring all equipment is used correctly.
- Reporting any damage or faults immediately to their line manager (staff) or person they are dealing with (contractor).
- Ensuring there is no visible damage to the electrical equipment, leads and plugs.
- Labelling faulty or damaged equipment.
- Where possible, physically remove the item with the plug taken off.

6.2 Arrangements for PAT Inspection & Equipment Testing:

Circle Voluntary Housing Association operates an annual PAT testing program which is facilitated by an external qualified electrical engineer. All electric equipment owned by Circle Voluntary Housing Association, including equipment issued to staff to facilitate their daily work and working from home, must be PAT tested.

At a pre-arranged time, the electrical contractor shall attend each Circle Voluntary Housing Association office to inspect all electrical equipment which is kept at that site. Staff are given the option to bring their home working and other organisation issued electrical equipment to any of the offices during the period when contractor is on site and will be informed of the relevant dates.

Staff are also offered the option to have a member of the electrical contractor's staff team to visit their home to perform PAT testing on all work issued devices and electrical equipment they have been provided with by the organisation.

The annual PAT testing program is arranged by the Asset Management team. All staff are informed of the PAT testing schedule in advance of rollout of the testing program each year, to ensure they are available when electrical engineer calls to their home.

PAT testing of all company owned and issued electrical devices and equipment is mandatory and all staff must comply with this equipment testing program.

6.3 Record Keeping:

Circle Voluntary Housing Association will retain all records and inventory list of all portable appliances which will contain the frequency of testing and the results from inspection and test. These records will be retained five years from date of testing as is required under legislation and will be made available to any relevant authority as required or were deemed necessary by the organisation.

The Fire & General Register in each premises will retain a copy of the PAT test results with the dates of testing in that area and results being available from the Asset Manager.

All tested appliances must be labelled with an asset identification tag. This tag provides each piece of equipment with a unique identifier which specifies the item description, where item is located, results of the test, tester name, age of the item (if known) and date of next inspection. This label must not be removed.

6.4 Faults in PAT Tested Equipment:

6.4.1: If an item fails the visual/ full test inspection it must be removed immediately and sent for repair by a suitably qualified electrician. Once rectified the item must be re-inspected and retested before being circulated into use once more.

6.4.2: If it is not possible to remove the faulty electrical item, e.g., dishwasher, copier, a member of the Property & Facilities Team or the IT/IG Team, depending on the type of equipment, must be contacted to arrange removal or replacement of item as soon as possible

6.4.3: If a fault occurs in an electrical item outside of normal office hours, i.e., after 5.30pm, over weekend or during closures, staff are required to ensure the electrical item is disconnected, removed where possible and labelled appropriately. A member of the Property & Facilities Team or the IT/ IG Team, depending on the type of equipment, must be contacted to arrange removal or replacement of item as soon as possible.

6.4.4: If fault cannot be rectified, the tester must notify the Property & Facilities Team to arrange for the appliance to be taken out of use and safely disposed of. The Property & Facilities Team member must inform the relevant manager of requirement to remove and dispose of item.

6.4.5: Under no circumstances can a piece of equipment which the tester has failed, labelled, and removed or notified others of requirement to remove from site, be brought back into site for use. As part of testing, where the piece of equipment fails, photos of the piece will be taken; these photos along with test results, fault (if visual) and fail tag will be sent to the Asset Manager to be held on file.

7.0 Roles & Responsibilities regarding Electrical Safety:

All employees, contractors and tenants have responsibilities regarding electrical safety. These roles and responsibilities are defined in this section.

7.1 Chief Executive Officer:

The Chief Executive Officer of Circle Voluntary Housing Association has ultimate accountability and responsibility for the services under their governance and to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare at work of all Circle Voluntary Housing Association employees.

7.2 Leadership team:

The Leadership Team shall ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable that:

- The Electrical Safety Policy and associated procedures are reviewed as per Circle Voluntary Housing Policy Framework and endorsed by this team.
- A culture where electrical safety is embedded into the planning of safe place and safe systems of work for employees and contractors.
- Arrangements are in place to ensure that all staff required to carry out any non-engineer specific (REC registered) electrical work, e.g., changing a plug, drilling into a wall, have received appropriate training and information.

7.3 Management Team:

The Management Team shall ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable that:

- The Electrical Safety Policy and associated procedures are reviewed as per Circle Voluntary Housing Policy Framework and endorsed by this team.
- A culture where electrical safety is embedded into the planning of safe place and safe systems of work for employees and contractors.
- Arrangements are in place to ensure that all staff required to carry out any non-engineer specific (REC registered) electrical work, e.g., changing a plug, drilling into a wall, have received appropriate training and information.

7.4 Director of Property:

Regarding the management of electrical safety, the Director of Property is responsible for the following:

- The implementation of this Policy and all associated procedures.
- Maintaining an effective plan for the on-going management of planned and responsive electrical maintenance, repair, testing, upgrade, and provision of new installations of electrical appliances, ensuring all delegated responsibilities are undertaken in an effective and timely manner.
- Ensure all risks associated with electrical installations are managed effectively.
- Ensure this policy and associated procedures are reviewed as per Circle Voluntary Housing Association policy framework.
- Act immediately if any serious deficiencies are identified within this document or any practices operated within the organisation regarding electrical safety.

7.5 Asset Manager:

Regarding electrical safety, the Asset Manager is the lead person for all contract management for the main service areas where electrical testing, installation etc., including PAT testing, is required. In addition, the Asset Manager is also responsible for the following:

- Operational delivery and compliance with this policy and staff awareness of this policy.
- Programming planned electrical inspection, testing, installation, repair, and maintenance, ensuring MRI Housing database is regularly monitored so that relevant assets are tested within their defined timescales.
- Ensuring those contracted to carry out inspections, testing installation and all works above minor level repairs, are appropriately skilled and are REC registered engineers.
- Working with Service Team to ensure appropriate and timely communication with tenants regarding planned electrical work or inspection.
- Working with the Property & Facilities Team to ensure appropriate and priority-based response to tenant reported electrical maintenance and repairs and that required in other premises owned or managed by Circle Voluntary Housing Association, including offices.
- Ensuring all inspection reports and certificates are provided to Circle Voluntary Housing Association by contracted personnel for review, and that these records are appropriately retained within the organisations file management database (SharePoint).
- Ensuring all members of their team know their responsibilities under this policy.

7.6 Asset & Facilities Co-ordinator:

The Asset & Facilities Co-ordinator is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy including:

- Ensuring the processes and procedures outlined in this policy are adequate to manage risks arising from electrical works.
- Ensuring sufficient information, instruction and training is carried out.
- Monitoring contractor performance.
- Ensuring, as far as reasonably practicable, that staff, contractors, members of the public are not unnecessarily exposed to electrical risk.
- Ensuring appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and that regular review is carried out.
- Ensuring appropriate inspections are carried out to assess the condition of electrical installations and equipment.
- Maintain property records including contractor reports and certifications.
- Attend training as required or at the request of Asset Manager.
- Provide advice on the application of this policy on a case-by-case basis.

7.7 Employees:

As with all health and safety matters, all Circle Voluntary Housing Association employees have responsibilities regarding electrical safety. Irrespective of their roles and responsibilities, all employees must:

- Be responsible for their own health and safety and that of others who may be adversely affected by electrical work including tenants, visitors, contractors, members of the public.
- Cooperate with colleagues and external agencies to ensure compliance with this policy and the associated legal requirements.
- Cease work which may or does pose a health and safety risk.
- Report any concerns regarding electrical safety including immediate or obvious hazards or risks, or regarding the management of electrical compliance and safety.
- Keep up to date with training, awareness training and information provided by the organisation regarding electrical safety, including that issued to support working from home.
- Report all accidents, incident and near misses as per Circle Voluntary Housing Associations Incident Management Policy.

7.8 Health & Safety Committee:

The Health & Safety Committee has a role in the review and approval of the Electrical Safety Policy, any associated procedures, and guidelines in line with Circle Voluntary Housing Associations Policy Framework, or when directed by changes in local practices or national legislation. The Committee are also involved in the review and assessment of any other electrical safety associated systems operated or proposed for use within the organisation.

7.9 Human Resources Department:

The Human Resources Department shall, in association with the Asset Manager and the Senior Accountable Officer (currently the Director of Property), ensure appropriate and regular electrical safety awareness training is provided to staff.

7.10 Tenants:

Under the terms of their Tenancy Agreement, all tenants must permit access to their property for maintenance, repair and/ or safety checks to be carried out.

Prior to the commencement of any works within a tenant home, the tenant will be informed in writing of the planned works with as much advance notice as possible given. Circle Voluntary Housing Association recognises that in some cases, there may be issues which contribute to problems accessing a tenant's home. These may be that the tenant may not have English as their first language, tenant may have support needs or there may be tenancy management issues. In such cases, where it is reasonably practicable to identify the needs of the tenant, the organisation will attempt to overcome or resolve the cause of the issue in a sensitive manner, prior to pursuing formal action.

It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that:

- All electrical repairs or faults are reported in a timely manner.
- Appropriate access and removal of obstacles is undertaken to allow Circle Voluntary Housing Association staff and contractors safe access and egress to carry out their work. Where the tenant is unable to manage this, support will be agreed and provided.
- Any contingency arrangements resulting from the absence of electrical power have been highlighted and agreed in advance of work taking place.
- Temporary provision for heating and hot water is made as required.

7.10.1 Tenant Electrical Equipment Safety Responsibilities:

Tenant owned electrical appliances are the tenant's responsibility. Every electrical possession of the tenant is not a responsibility of Circle Voluntary Housing Association. Such items must be repaired and maintained by the tenant.

Examples of tenant owned possessions are hair dryer, computer, vacuum cleaner. Landlord insurance does not cover tenant possessions and the organisation does not hold any liability for damage caused by power failures.

Tenant damage to electrical wiring is the tenant's responsibility. Circle Voluntary Housing Association is only obliged to maintain electrical wiring that has malfunctioned independently during normal use. If a tenant wilfully or accidentally damages electrical wiring or landlord installed electrical equipment, it is expected that the tenant will cover the cost of repairs or replacement.

Tenants must not:

- Use electrical equipment against their intended purpose (for example, using a hair dryer to defrost a frozen refrigerator).
- Store flammable or hazardous materials near electrical outlets.
- Clutter luggage near electrical outlets.
- Allow water, damp, or moisture near and around electrical outlets.
- Dismantle electrical equipment.
- Attempt repair of electrical equipment (except if they are a certified electrician).
- Modify electrical equipment.
- Overload the electric grid with too many plugged appliances.
- Leave unmonitored working electrical appliances, like the oven, or iron.

Tenants are required to report all electrical issues, including repairs to Circle Voluntary Housing Association staff as they appear, to ensure repairs are carried out effectively and in a timely manner.

Where tenant is a cost rental tenant, Circle Voluntary Housing Association is responsible for any electrical appliances installed by the organisation.

7.11 Contractors:

It is the responsibility of those contracted to undertake electrical inspection, testing, installation, and repair to ensure the following:

- No harm to any person occurs because of the work being carried out.
- No damage occurs to property because of the work being carried out.
- Inspection and testing results are compared with design criteria of the building.
- Relevant reports and certificates are issued to Circle Voluntary Housing Association upon completion of inspection, testing, installation, or repair. Where appropriate or requested, the contractor must advise in writing any remedial action to be taken. The priority status of works must also be provided in report.
- If a dangerous situation is identified by the contractor, this is to be immediately made safe, ensuring firstly that they themselves and others on site are not put at risk by doing so. When area has been made safe, the contractor must immediately notify the Circle Voluntary Housing Association staff member managing/ organising the works to inform them of the identified danger and to seek advice and assistance in how to proceed.

8.0 Dissemination:

This Policy is available on Circle Voluntary Housing Association SharePoint policies page within folder titled *"Health and Safety Policies & Procedures."*

9.0 Implementation:

In conjunction with the requirement to familiarise themselves with this policy, staff must also attend any training or information sessions regarding electrical safety and read any additional information material provided to them.

10.0 Review and Audit of Policy:

This Policy will be reviewed in line with the Circle Voluntary Housing Associations Policy Framework Document or when directed by changes in local practices or national legislation.

11.0 Associated Legislation:

- Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007.
- Safety, Health, and Welfare (General Application) Regulations, 2007, Part 3: Electricity (S.I. No. 299).
- S.R. 61936:2019: Guidelines on the Application of I.S. EN 61936-1:2010 & A1:2014, Power Installations Exceeding 1kVa.c. – Part 1: Common Rules.
- I.S. EN 50110-1:2013 Operation of Electrical Installations – Part 1: General Requirements.
- IS 10101:2020: 5th Edition National Rules for Electrical Installations (Wiring Rules) (replaces IS 101:2008), becoming effective in 2022.

12.0 Related Policies:

- Incident Management Policy & Procedure
- Risk Management Policy & Procedure
- Safety Statement
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Training and Development Policy

13.0 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Portable Equipment Definitions:

What is portable equipment?

Portable equipment is equipment, including handheld portable equipment which:

- Is required to be moved while it is working.
- Is designed so that it can be moved while it is working.
- Can be moved between period during which it is working.
- Handheld equipment which is subject to wear and tear.
- Handheld equipment which is exposed to corrosive or unclean conditions.
- Equipment that is frequently used.
- Equipment which is frequently moved between rooms.
- Previously owned equipment.

What does portable equipment include?

A portable appliance is any item of equipment with a lead and a plug, and which can normally be moved around or can be moved and is connected to the mains supply by a standard three pin plug. Examples are computers, laptops, heaters, photocopiers, leads etc. This is not an exhaustive list.

How is portable equipment classified?

Class 1: Examples are kettles, toasters, microwaves, washing machines, dishwashers, tumble driers.

Class 2: Examples are televisions, lamps, power tools.

Leads: Examples are appliances where leads or cables can be detached and tested as a separate item or with the equipment.

IT: Examples are computers, laptops, printers, scanners.

What is Portable Appliance Testing?

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is an established, recognised and widely practiced method of ensuring that portable and transportable electrical equipment is maintained in a safe condition to avoid any hazard to person or property. PAT testing can be achieved by visual inspection, backed up with user checks combined with inspections and testing.

Who is competent to carry out Portable Appliance Testing?

A competent person can be a REC registered electrician or a person who has successfully completed a PAT testing course and passed the relevant exam. Upon passing this exam the competent person is awarded a certificate which qualifies them to carry out PAT testing.

What are user checks?

The person using the equipment should check the condition of the equipment prior to use. It is relatively easy for people to spot and report signs of damage, overheating or misuse of equipment.

In what conditions or locations may periodic PAT testing by a competent person be necessary?

- In extreme hazardous environment.
- After repair work on the equipment.
- Handheld equipment, which is subject to wear and tear.
- Equipment used where there may be corrosive or unclean conditions.
- Equipment that is frequently used.
- Equipment frequently moved between rooms.
- Previously owned equipment.